Private Flying

AN ANGLO-GERMAN GLIDING CAMP

Fraternal Fortnight at Dunstable

THE visit of some two dozen young German glider pilots to Dunstable Downs, the headquarters of the London Gliding Club, during the last fortnight in August provided a welcome opportunity for English gliding men to make some return for the hospitality extended to the British team at the recent international soaring competitions in Germany. The visit was arranged by the Anglo-German Circle, who have for some years been organising "work camps," both in England and in Germany, where young people of both nationalities can meet and establish contacts. Last year, as an experiment, a camp was held in which gliding training was substituted for the usual manual labour which had served as an occupation at previous camps. It was held in Germany, and was so successful that this year it was decided to try holding a similar camp in England.

The German members of the camp had been chosen from the Hitler Youth and similar organisations. About half of them had not yet reached the soaring stage of their training, while of the other half three were so far advanced to have already earned the international "Silver C" certificate, for which flights of 50 kilometres distance, 1,000 metres climb and 5 hours duration are required. Flights of 5 hours towards their "Silver C" were made by three more of the Germans during the camp, but facilities for cross-country flying on club machines could not be arranged. However, instructional work proceeded with so much energy that 12 "A" and 15 "B" gliding certificates and 6 "C" soaring certificates were qualified for among the 40 British and German pupils attending the camp.

By the greatest good fortune a spell of almost continuous westerly winds coincided with the first week of the camp, and the soaring pilots among our visitors greatly enjoyed the novelty of flying over foreign hills, especially when they could get as far along the Downs as Whipsnade and look down on the Zoo from about 200 ft.

From Sunday, August 15, to Sunday, August 22, inclusive, 178¾ hours of soaring were done over the club ground, easily a record for such a short period. It is true that other club members, outside the camp organisation, contributed to this total. Having their own machines, many of them took the opportunity to make cross-country flights, and their efforts resulted in another record figure being achieved; within a week 450 miles were covered in cross-country flying.

Mr. Phillip Wills led off on Sunday, August 15, with the longest distance soaring flight of the year, going 98 miles to Dover. It was the first time a landing had been made south of the Thames, though there have been many previous attempts to get into Kent. The difficulty has always been the lack of thermal currents over the damp ground adjoining the Thames estuary. But on this day, for some reason, the pilot found specially good lift all the way from Purfleet to Tilbury, crossed the river at Gravesend, and continued across Kent till he reached the coast near Lympne with 4,500 ft. to spare. With the help of a strong tail wind this should have enabled the Channel crossing to be made; but an attempt by Mr. Wills to get a little more lift from another cloud, before setting off across the water, unfortunately resulted in his Hjordis sailplane losing height instead, so he had to come down on the English side after all.

For the first part of his journey Mr. Wills was accompanied by Mr. Cristopher Nicholson in the Rhönsperber sailplane, but the latter lost the thermals after a time and, finding himself over Hendon aerodrome, landed there rather than go on to a risky landing among the northern suburbs of London.

Other notable flights, of up to 45 miles, were made by a number of members.

The Second Week

The second week of the Anglo-German camp was, in the absence of soaring winds, devoted to elementary training and visiting places of interest.

Towards the end of the week there was some excitement when Herr Wolf Hirth, the German soaring pioneer, arrived over the club ground in his Klemm with a two-seater Minimoa sailplane in tow, piloted by Fräulein Eva Schmidt. They had flown thus from the Hornberg gliding school, near Stuttgart, spending two nights on the way, with stops at Croydon, Brussels and Lympne. Next evening Fräulein Hanna Reitsch, the famous woman glider pilot who was made a captain in the German Air Force, flew over from Germany by aeroplane and visited the camp.

Finally the Germans were all taken to Derbyshire in motor coaches to spend the week-end seeing the commencement of the British national soaring competitions at Great Hucklow. They are then to spend two days in London before going home, and will be entertained by the Royal Aero Club.

The Artillery in the Air

ALTHOUGH the weather at High Post on August 21 was, apart from a fairly strong N.W. wind, reasonably good, the conditions in some of the Home County areas was such that a number of possible arrivals must have been turned back. We, ourselves, endeavouring to make the best of a bad job from the North London district, were forced to return to Hatfield.

However, about a hundred members and guests attended the opening meet of the Royal Artillery Flying Club, and they included Maj. Gen. A. F. Brooke, C.B., D.S.O., Maj. Gen. A. P. V. Langhorne, C.B., D.S.O., M.C., and Brig. Gen. H. R. S. Massy, D.S.O., M.C., the chairman of the club. Lt. Col. W. E. Duncan and Mrs. Duncan, Capt. J. S. Wilkins and Lt. P. R. Waterfield flew to the meet, the first two carrying a son each as passenger.

There were two competitions for members with less than fifty hours' flying to their credit—the first for pin-pointing and message-dropping, and the second for landing.

The results of these two events decided the winner of the R.A. Flying Club cup, who was, in fact, 2nd Lt. A. Acland. The Wiltshire School of Flying presented another cup for landing style and this was also won by 2nd Lt. Acland.

The club machine, a Swallow, was on view and was used for an open height-judging competition, which was won by Maj. Foster with Mr. Collins as runner-up.

Coupe Deutsch Cancelled—but 1938 Rules Issued

THERE will be no Coupe Deutsch Race this year. Originally seven machines were entered for the event, which was fixed for September 12, but the five Caudron entries were cancelled a couple of months ago. The two remaining machines were Lignels. One of these was damaged in a recent test flight, and the second is said not to have come up to expectations, so this entry, also, has now been cancelled.

Meanwhile, and optimistically, regulations for the 1938 Coupe Deutsch have been issued. They reveal an interesting innovation in that the engine capacity is reduced from the present maximum of 8 litres to 6½ litres. Mlle. Suzanne Deutsch de la Meurthe, the donor of the prizes, has stated that the 100,000 francs cash prize which would have been awarded to the winner this year will be added to the 1938 prizes, which will thus total 200,000 francs.